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EVALUATION OF TEACHERS--THE PRINCIPAL'S DILEMMA.

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IN 1966, A STUDY WAS MADE OF THE EVALUATION OF TEACHERS BY THEIR PRINCIPALS. THERE WAS AN 80 PERCENT RESPONSE TO THE RANDOM SAMPLE OF 336 NEW YORK STATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS. SCHOOL SIZE MADE SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY SINCE MANY PRINCIPALS HAD NO ADMINISTRATIVE HELP. TWO-THIRDS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS PROVIDED PRINCIPALS WITH "RATING FORMS" AS THE BASIC TOOLS OF EVALUATION. ANALYSIS OF THESE FORMS REVEALED INFORMATION ABOUT THE INITIAL MANNER OF EVALUATION AND THE PROBABLE USE OF THESE EVALUATIONS. FORMS WHICH THE TEACHERS SAW AND SIGNED HAD CLEAR DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE TEACHERS, AND FORMS WHICH CONTAINED NO PROVISION FOR TEACHER'S SIGNATURE HAD A LIST OF SINGLE WORDS OR PHRASES WHICH TENDED TO CREATE A "HALO EFFECT." PRINCIPALS FELT THEIR TEACHERS WERE AWARE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS OF SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION. LESS THAN HALF THE PRINCIPALS NOTIFIED TEACHERS OF IMPENDING SUPERVISORY VISITS. MOST HELD A CONFERENCE WITH THE TEACHERS AFTER OBSERVATION, AND ALMOST ALL CARRIED OUT INFORMAL SUPERVISION. RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE (1) REDUCTION OF SUPERVISOR-TEACHER RATIO, (2) CONFERENCE AFTER OBSERVATION, (3) AVAILABILITY TO TEACHERS OF THE PRINCIPAL'S WRITTEN REPORT, (4) JOINT SUPERVISOR-TEACHER DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES OF SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION, (5) PRINCIPAL'S CONSULTATION WITH SENIOR TEACHERS REGARDING REAPPOINTMENT, AND (6) PERIODICAL REVIEW AND REVISION OF THE STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES. (CC)

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Evaluation of Teachers: The Principal's Dilemma

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The principal is the instructional leader of his school. His role in the evaluation of teachers is a vehicle which enables him to exercise this leadership. The judgments he makes concerning the effectiveness of each teacher contributes toward that teacher's professional growth. But if his judgments are unsound they can also reduce a teacher's effectiveness as a guide to learning. Every principal holds in his hands the career of a significant number of teachers. Hopefully, principals exercise wise judgments and view their role as one of helping their teachers do a better job with students.

In late fall of 1966 the authors conducted a study of this important aspect of administration. A random sample of 336 elementary schools scattered across New York State were selected. These schools were located in the largest cities of the state, small cities, central schools in rural areas, suburban schools, schools noted for their innovations in education and schools still blissfully unaware of current events in the world of education. Two hundred and sixty-seven elementary principals responded to our questions relating to their supervisory practices. This represents an 80 per cent return and justifies the use of these data to support some generalizations concerning current practices in the elementary schools of New York State.

The size of the schools participating in this study are much larger than was expected in that only 3 per cent had an enrollment between 200 and 400 pupils. Twenty-eight per cent were between 400-600 pupils, 36 per cent had 600-800 students and 33 per cent had enrollments of over 800 students. There appears to be a trend

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toward ever bigger elementary schools. It would seem that elementary schools are larger than the generally recommended size. The sheer size of the administrator's supervisory role appears to be unwieldy. Unfortunately, the burdens of administration are not being shared in that 76 per cent of the responding principals do not have any administrative help. More than half of the principals reported that they alone are responsible for the evaluation of 30-50 teachers and 13 per cent for more than 50 teachers. These responsibilities for evaluation and supervision of the increasing numbers of teachers can only lead to superficial help from the principal.

This problem is further highlighted when one examines the ratio of teachers to supervisor. Thirty per cent have a ratio of 1-20 or less; 30 per cent 1-30; 19 per cent 1-40; 15 per cent 1-50; and 6 per cent 1 to more than 50 teachers. It is inconceivable that a principal can effectively supervise and evaluate, with any regularity, numbers such as our principals reported they were required to help.

Two-thirds of the school districts provide principals with written procedures and standards to assist with the task of evaluation of teachers. The tools of evaluation consist basically of "Rating Forms" where the evaluator checks or writes comments about various aspects of teaching. An analysis of these forms reveals interesting similarities and striking differences.

Analyses of these forms showed several distinctive characteristics which fell into two broad categories. One of these categories related to the manner in which the evaluation was initially carried out. The other related to the probable use to which this evaluation would be put. Many of the forms were made up of lists of single words or phrases which sought to characterize distinguishing traits of teachers. Some of the forms were composed of more elaborately delineated descriptive statements. In each of these cases the word, phrase, or statement was set on a rating scale of from three to five adjectives and/or

numbers. A few of the evaluation forms were built around a small number of open-ended statements. These statements were followed by large blank spaces to invite the rater to react to the open-ended statement and the situation in which the teacher was being evaluated. Some of the forms contained no provision for the person being evaluated to see and sign the rating form, others did. This latter provision gave a clear indication concerning the use or follow up for one type of evaluation from which may or may not have followed the use of the other.

The entire collection of rating forms were analyzed in terms of these characteristics. It was found that the evaluation forms which teachers signed tended to be constructed in such a way that they would serve as a focusing vehicle in a conference between the person doing the evaluation and the person evaluated. It was also found that the forms that were not signed by the teacher rated tended to contribute toward that classic error of measurement that plagues rating scales and is known as the "halo effect."

A study of the tables and an application of some basic principles concerning the validity, reliability and utility of measuring instruments points up some interesting distinctions between the evaluation forms that are signed and those that are not signed by the teacher rated. The forms that are signed by the teacher tend to contain fewer items, and are more likely to be open-ended or built on a criteria that is delineated by a descriptive statement. Forms that are not signed tend to be made up of a criteria that is delineated by a large number of single words or phrases. The single word or phrase generally allows for a wider variety of individual interpretation than the descriptive statement and the tedium of long lists coupled with this tendency toward individual interpretation encourages a "halo effect." The instrument then becomes a vehicle for pseudo objectivity behind which the rater can place his initial biases concerning the teacher and the instrument lends itself to the possibility

of being used with little regard for the actual situation being observed. The signed rating forms by the very provision for the teacher to see and sign the instrument insures a greater opportunity to use the instrument as a vehicle to facilitate communication between teacher and administrator. Little wonder therefore that they tend to provide for greater clarity of meaning for items in a criteria for judging teachers and teaching or tend to be centered around a few open-ended statements to focus the administrators' judgments concerning the teacher's effectiveness in the situation being observed.

Characteristics of items on rating forms that were signed and not signed by the teacher rated*

	Single Word or Phrase Items		Descriptive Statement Items		Open-ended Statement Items		Total Number of Rating Scales	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No formal provision for teacher to sign rating form	33	38	9	10	10	12	52	60
Formal provision for Teacher to see and	16	19	5	6	13	15	34	40

* $X^2 = 7.42 > 5.99 = P\ .05$ at 2 degrees of freedom

Comparative length of various kinds of rating forms that were signed and not signed by the teacher rated

	Single Word or Phrase Items		Descriptive Statement Items		Open-ended Statement Items	
No formal provision for teacher to sign rating form	Q_3	35	Q_3	30	Q_3	9
	Md	24	Md	18	Md	7
	Q_1	11	Q_1	11	Q_1	5
Formal provision for teacher to see and sign rating form	Q_3	35	Q_3	21	Q_3	5
	Md	19	Md	13	Md	4
	Q_1	16	Q_1	6	Q_1	3

Principals feel their teachers are clearly aware of the school district's procedures and standards of supervision and evaluation. Seventy per cent indicated that the teachers are aware of the standards. Only 13 per cent said the teachers did not know the basis of how their work is evaluated, while 15 per cent indicated that they did not know if the teachers were aware of the district policies. There is some question as to the possibility that the principal is assuming an awareness for a generous number of his teachers concerning the way their work will be evaluated. After several years of contact with teachers taking graduate courses, the authors have found few who were aware of how their work was evaluated. It would seem that this question could be clarified through additional research.

Less than half (41 per cent) of the principals give prior notice of an impending supervisory visit. Fifty per cent either do not give prior notice or do so upon occasion. This procedure has always been debatable. Many principals feel that notice will produce a "canned" lesson and does not reflect the day to day activities of the normal classroom. A teacher once confessed to one of the authors that she instructed her students in the following procedure to be employed whenever a visitor arrived. Visitors like to see all children participating in class discussion. All hands should be raised whenever a question is asked. Students should raise their right hand if they know the answer to the question; their left hand if they do not. The teacher promised the class she would call only on students whose right hand was raised. She said it worked beautifully and no supervisor ever was wise to the scheme. All were duly impressed by the enthusiasm of the class and how well prepared her students were in the subject.

Incidents such as the one illustrated, real or imagined, may well be at the root of the principal's reasoning regarding announced supervisory visits. But the deception itself also points out the futility of "snoopervision" and the need for

greater professional competence on the part of the supervisor. It is also true that teachers will soon be demanding and winning the right to greater participation in educational enterprises and this may well entitle them to know when they will be visited and evaluated.

Principals tend to visit probationary teachers more often than tenure teachers, although 17 per cent observe all teachers in the same manner. Fifty-six per cent of the probationary teachers are observed at least once a month compared with 29 per cent of the teachers with tenure.

The time spent in teacher observation varies from under ten minutes to all morning or all afternoon with 60 per cent of the principals observing teachers from twenty to forty minutes. Twelve per cent spend from ten to twenty minutes and 12 per cent from forty-five to ninety minutes.

Formal observation is normally followed up with a conference between the principal and the teacher. Ninety-nine per cent of our sample held a conference. Sixty-two per cent of the principals provide a written report; however, 58 per cent show or give a copy of the report to the teacher.* This is generally conceived that good supervision should <u>always</u> be followed with a conference and that the purpose of this conference should be the improvement of instruction.

<u>Informal Supervision</u>

In addition to formal observation, principals consider other factors in evaluating teachers. We have no doubt that these factors are almost as important as formal observation to the principal. Ninety-seven per cent of the principals stated that they observe teachers during routine rounds of the building. Forty-three per cent cited bus duty; 60 per cent, playground duty; 50 per cent, cafeteria duty; and 69 per cent, while the teacher is moving the class from one

*This figure differs from the 40 per cent of the rating forms that provide for the teacher's signature and may show a trend in local option.

teaching situation to another within the building. Surprisingly, 2 per cent use the school intercom for supervision. Only a few teachers invite principals to visit their classroom. Perhaps this is an area for improvement. The principals would like teachers to invite them to see their class in action, but our sample disclosed that only 2 per cent of the principals stated that their staff members invited them to their classrooms.

Perhaps one reason for this unhappy situation is that teachers by and large view evaluation as an administrative perogative and not as a joint effort. Cooperating principals were asked if they involved senior or mature teachers in decisions regarding the reappointment of teachers. Only 12 per cent of the principals indicated that they utilize this type of consultation. By and large principals indicate that they are satisfied with their procedures in this area. Only 19 per cent said that they were not pleased with their methods of evaluation and principals believe teachers are complacent about how their work is evaluated. Only 8 per cent thought their teachers were not in accord with the district plans for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As teachers become more and ever more militant and demanding this area of their vital concern will assume major proportions in education. The profession needs to prepare for this day. It is believed that the following will help:

1. The ratio of supervisors to teachers should be reduced. Today the average principal is expected to supervise between 30 and 50 teachers.

   If this was all we expected of a principal in our judgment it would be excessive. It is recommended that the ratio be reduced to enable the principal to engage in effective supervision.

2. Observation should always be followed by a conference directed toward improvement of the teacher's professional competence.
3. There should be a written report and the teacher should always receive and have an opportunity to react to this report.
4. Standards and procedures for supervision should be developed jointly by administrators and teachers. In far too many cases these instruments and procedures are the sole product of the administrators mind without teacher involvement.
5. Principals should consult with senior teachers regarding reappointment. The old days of the principal with his teachers teaching in his school is being replaced by the principal and the teachers working together in their school.
6. Jointly agreed upon standards and procedures for evaluation should be published and available to teachers and where necessary explained to them. This should be added to the orientation program for new staff - and periodically for the old staff. Most importantly procedures should be reviewed and revised periodically - with teacher participation.

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